The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor according to the industrial, fraternal, and political fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR BAYONDS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1741 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, AUGUST 22, 1944 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 34, NO. 34

FACING *the* FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Perhaps you would like to know the strongest anti-labor force in America today. It is the CIO Political Action Committee.

Because of the resentment aroused by the partisan activities of this committee, vital legislation for the protection of the workers of America during the post-war period has been killed by the Senate.

Not only that. It now appears quite certain that any other legislation favored by labor during this session of Congress is doomed.

The worst part of the situation is that many members of Congress who formerly were responsive to labor's point of view on legislation have become so antagonized by the partisan campaigning of the CIO Political Action Committee that they have gone over with the southern Democratic reactionaries and the tory Republicans.

This group in Congress, once an ineffectual minority, is now in the saddle and running things. The nation has the CIO Political Action Committee to thank for that.

More To Come

More is yet to come. Members of Congress are on the warpath and they are out gunning for the individuals who make up the CIO Political Action Committee. The Communist affiliation of some of the key figures in the PAC will be thoroughly exposed. The unsavory past association with the racketeering by some leading lights of the PAC will be brought to light. This will make delightful reading for the enemies of labor, but it will hurt the cause of the nation's workers for many years to come.

And all for what? By what stretch of imagination does the CIO Political Action Committee figure to add a single vote for the candidates it espouses? Whom are they going to convince? Their own members? Surely the allegiance of the membership of the CIO to the present Administration is secure enough to make the expensive and extensive operations of the PAC wholly unwarranted.

Then who else is the PAC going to convert politically? Do they think they can influence the membership of the AFL? Do they think the members of railway unions will have any truck with them? Are they vain enough to believe they can persuade any sizeable portion of the American people who are not identified with labor and who are not already partisans in the same cause?

These questions answer themselves. Anyone with a grain of common sense and an iota of political judgment realizes that the CIO-PAC can only antagonize voters, not persuade them. This country is so thoroughly prejudiced against the CIO-PAC, and with good reason, that Sidney Hillman and his ambitious entourage are bound to cost the Roosevelt-Truman slate a good many votes by their very support of that ticket.

The Real Low-Down

Then what is behind the whole picture? What's the real low-down?

Here it is. The CIO-PAC does not give a tinker's dam for Roosevelt or any other political candidate. Its leader, Mr. Hillman, is interested in high principles or liberal progressivism. He is just as cold and cross and unprincipled as any of the old-time political bosses.

The real answer to the CIO-PAC is fear. Mr. Hillman, Mr. Murray and their CIO followers are afraid their organization will fall apart and be wrecked when the post-war pinch comes. The CIO is basically insecure. It is not in a position to withstand competition. That is why it is trying to buy this election.

The only hope for post-war survival of the CIO, its strategists figure, is the election of a national administration so committed to the CIO that it will use the machinery of the government of the United States to support and perpetuate the CIO during a period when organized labor will be fighting itself.

But partisan politics is a strange game. John L. Lewis tried to buy an election in 1936 for the CIO but the bargain didn't stick and within four years Lewis and Roosevelt were at each other's throats.

We do not believe that President Roosevelt can be bought. We do not believe his candidacy will be helped by the sort of support he is getting from the CIO. We are convinced that Mr. Hillman's political gamble will not only prove a fearful boomerang for the CIO but that it will do lasting harm to the cause of the entire labor movement of America.

AFL Opens "Get-Out-The-Vote" Drive

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor launched a nation-wide drive to get out the vote in its seven million members in the November election.

AFL President William Green ordered the establishment of almost a thousand state and local non-partisan political committees in every part of the country to see to it that Federation members register in accordance with state laws and that they go to the polls to cast their ballots on election day.

Each of the 900 city central labor unions affiliated with the AFL and the State Federations of Labor in every state, as well as in Alaska and Puerto Rico, was directed by Mr. Green to set up committees "to get out the vote.

"These committees," Mr. Green said in a circular letter of instructions, "can render a great service to labor and to the nation. If labor participates fully in the election, labor and the friends of labor can win.

"I urge State federations of labor and city central bodies to continue to the non-partisan political policy of the American Federation of Labor in the appointment of committees for the purpose of bringing about registration and a full vote at the polls. Reject any and all appeals to become partisan or to become identified with political organizations. We cannot afford to tie up with any political party or to become identified with a political party. Experience has shown that the interests of labor are promoted by supporting candidates for office whose records show them to be sympathetic with labor and supporters of labor's legislative program, and to oppose those who are known to be against us, regardless of party affiliation."

Green Hails ILO Role In Future

Washington, D. C.—In a nation-wide radio program marking the tenth anniversary of United States participation in the International Labor Organization, AFL President William Green declared the past accomplishments of the ILO have been merely a period of preparation for the great promise of the future.

He said:

"Until now the ILO has been forced to function in an international atmosphere of suspicion, distrust and hesitancy. Our own country has traditionally been reluctant to make any binding international ties. The evil outgrowth of fascism in Germany, Italy and other countries made it increasingly difficult for the democracies to further the ends of economic progress through the ILO.

"But the experiences of the world in this war and the now inescapable victory of the United Nations in the great conflict against the forces of hate and oppression have changed the former picture entirely.

"We can now look forward with confidence to a period of unexampled international cooperation when this war ends—sincere cooperation by nations of good will to prevent and outlaw the outbreak of future wars.

"Among the lessons we have studied history well to learn is that peace is only political but economic. The ILO said in its Philadelphia Charter that 'poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere.' By the same token, we must appreciate the fact that prosperity anywhere eventually constitutes a threat to the security of peace everywhere.

"Therefore, in the post-war world the ILO's chief function will be to abolish poverty wherever it exists on earth so that peoples of all nations and all races will be able to live and grow in a more peaceful, a more secure and a more prosperous world. The governments of the United States and the International Labor Organization are dedicated to the achievement of this objective."

Others who appeared on the same program were Secretary of Labor Perkins and Henry I. Harriman, former President of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce.

Wage Freezing May Force Depression In Post-War, Meany Tells N. Y. Labor

Syracuse, N. Y.—There is no sound reason for mass unemployment in this country when peace comes, AFL Secretary-Treasurer George Meany told the New York State Federation of Labor Convention here in a fighting speech.

"Never again will we in America be tolerant of a situation where there are millions of our citizens walking the streets seeking jobs that are not to be had," Meany declared.

American industrial facilities, which are the highest and most productive for such a magnificent purpose, "can produce just as wonderfully and in just as great quantities when the peace comes and want, as civilians, when the war ends to give us and our families happier and fuller lives."

The real market for full American production is not in foreign lands, Mr. Meany declared, but right here inside our own borders where the American people live.

"This brings us face to face with the most vital problem that faces America today—the problem of securing and maintaining an adequate wage level that will enable American workers to step in the market as consumers of the many, many things we will be able to produce in the future."

Mr. Meany blasted the wage-freezing Little Steel Formula of the National War Labor Board as a breach of faith by the Government toward labor, as an unconscionable injustice to America's workers who are producing for victory and as a brake on post-war prosperity.

"Our present frozen wage structure," he said, "constitutes a firm basis for post-war depression with millions upon millions unemployed immediately after the end of the war."

It is up to organized labor itself, with its great army of members, to break the Little Steel Formula, Mr. Meany declared, because they can expect no aid from the press or from the government or from any of its agencies, including the Department of Labor.

He cited the idea of a "starry-eyed" professor who sits on the War Labor Board as a public member," proposing that the lid be kept on wages now but that later, when the war ends and plants are shutting down by the thousands all over the country and when mass unemployment is already an accomplished fact—then raise wages 35 per cent. Mr. Meany commented:

"I am sure that we can visualize the attitude of employers on a question of this kind when the patriotic incentive to eliminate industrial strife has vanished."

The real answer to the problem is to readjust the Little Steel formula now to conform to the actual rise in living costs since the war started. He concluded:

"Only then can we do justice to America's great army of industrial workers who have given so much for victory. Only then can we say to the returning soldier and sailor, who have fought our battle on the front lines—yes, we have preserved our private standard of living while you were away. Only then can we avert a post-war economy that would mean large profits to the few and job-begging for the many. Only then can we look forward to an America in which all who are ready, willing and able to work will be able to find work.

"Your job now is to use your trade union strength to secure increases upward of our present frozen wage structure in order to prevent economic chaos after the war."

Nazi Defeat Will Cut Production 40 Percent At Once, Nelson Says

Washington, D. C.—War Production Board Chairman Donald M. Nelson estimated that the collapse of Nazi Germany would bring at 40 per cent slash in war production and make possible a 20 per cent increase in production of civilian goods—up to the level of 1939, which was "a very good year."

Nelson cautioned a press conference that only simple items will be produced immediately, as a result of his order permitting civilian production when components, materials and facilities are available.

However, as the labor picture sees, more production will be made possible, he said.

"The shock to war production after the defeat of Germany will bring a period of unemployment while industry is being reconverted, Nelson said, but the length of the period of illness will depend on the thoroughness with which WPB, military requirements and private industry plan for the changeover.

Nelson expressed confidence that the War Manpower Commission would not place undue obstacles in the path of reconversion and cited a statement he issued jointly with Paul V. McNutt, chairman of the War Manpower Commission, that the two agencies were working closely together. War Mobilizer James F. Byrnes, in a recent directive, authorized the War Manpower Commission to veto any proposals for a new civilian production if the manpower required was needed elsewhere.

The McNeil-Nelson statement emphasized that "war production has first claim on the nation's manpower," it added:

"That fact should be the maximum resumption of civilian production consistent with war production needs; that therefore, wherever labor and materials are available which are not needed for war, and labor is available for, war production, they should be employed in civilian production."

Labor Fights For Good Jobs For "G. I. Joes," Green Says

Tells Veterans AFL Plans To Aid Servicemen And Disabled Men

Chicago.—Uncle Sam's G. I. Joes can rely on their union brothers to help them find jobs and get a new start in life when the war ends, AFL President William Green pledged the Veterans of Foreign Wars meeting here in their 45th national encampment.

"Let me emphasize as strongly as I can that organized labor has fought, is fighting and will continue to fight to preserve the opportunities for the servicemen of our nation," Mr. Green, told the cheering veterans.

"The seven million members of the American Federation of Labor and all their friends will stand firmly and unswervingly with you in a fixed determination to win complete victory in the war, to win the ensuing peace, to preserve for all time our free institutions and our democratic form of government and to provide decent jobs at good pay for all returning veterans," he said.

Mr. Green stressed particularly the need for more comprehensive action to assist disabled veterans. He declared:

"To offer them hospitalization is not enough. To leave them to the care of charity after such hospitalization ends would be a criminal disgrace. America needs these men and we must make them understand that. We must not let them consider themselves helpless and discarded cripples. They want to be useful citizens, they want to make their contributions to society and they must above all to have a chance to make their own way in the future. Most of them can do this if they receive the proper training. Organized labor will see to it that they get this training, even if we have to go to the job ourselves. We will be more than willing to work with the proper government agencies to give these boys a new vocational education and to help them find jobs for which they are qualified.

"One of the obstacles to be overcome is the practice of some insurance companies who charge higher rates to cover factories where handicapped workers are employed. As a result, some employers hesitate to give jobs to handicapped persons, even though they are highly qualified, for fear of having to pay higher insurance bills. Actually, the accident rate among handicapped workers is five percent lower than among other workers. I say to you now that if the insurance companies persist in blocking employment of partially disabled veterans by such means, organized labor will see to it that they are put out of the workmen's compensation field and place such insurance exclusively under State funds.

"Labor, too, has its war casualties. Thirteen casualties, harvested since Pearl Harbor while serving on so-called "safe" jobs on the production line, have reached the staggering total of 4,681,709 according to official figures supplied to me by the War Production Board. Of these 4,681,500 workers have lost their lives, while 181,200 have become permanently disabled. It is our first purpose to see to it that these disabled workers are placed in self-supporting jobs along with the disabled war veterans."

The veterans applauded vociferously as Mr. Green cited the tremendous production achievements of labor in the war and as he emphasized that the American Federation of Labor has done its utmost to discourage strikes and to increase output of vital war equipment.

In many cases, the AFL chief said, the speed and efficiency with which labor has responded to the needs of the hour made the difference between life and death to the men in the armed forces.

"The American doughboy, among the vast fleets of fighting planes and fighting ships which are protecting him and witnessing with his own eyes the superiority of his fighting equipment over anything the enemy can throw at him, must experience a deep sense of gratitude to his friends at home who are backing him up so effectively."

More than a million and a half AFL members are now members of the armed forces, Mr. Green continued, including 80 percent of the 225,000 enrollment in the Seabees, the fighting construction battalions of the Navy which have made such a glorious record in this war.

Mr. Green reviewed the steps taken by labor to help servicemen, including all-out support for the G. I. Bill of Rights," adopted by Congress, and the production of other important legislation to protect veterans as well as war workers in the post-war period.

He also pointed out that the recent agreement entered into by organized labor with the Veterans of Foreign Wars will extend the seniority rights of servicemen when they return to civilian life and seek to get their old jobs back. Mr. Green also emphasized the fact that many AFL unions already have voted to admit honorably discharged servicemen into union membership without payment of initiation fees.

The enthusiastic reception given to the AFL President by the delegates to the veterans encampment was an encouraging sign of the development of closer and better relations between the fighting armies of America and the army of production.

Caviar And Champagne on $25 A Week

(*Extracts From Editorial By I. F. Stone In PM.*)

That sage of smugness, Arthur Krock, attacks the Murray-Kilgore-Celler "Full-Employment" bill as "a lazy man's dream . . . a bill to make unemployment bearable." He says it is intended to make the post-war U.S.A. "an unending vacation and fish fry, with the fish limited to caviar, and pompano and champagne substituted for beer."

His heavy-footed attempt at whimsy has given the conservative press its cue. That gentle relic, Mark Sullivan, chimes in nervously: "Preserving of Incentive to Work Held Vital in Aid to Unemployed." And the New York Times asks, with elephantine cuteness: "How many people would work for less when they could rest for more?"

We find it difficult to believe Krock and newspapermen, who live by dutifully echoing upper-bracket reaction, speak so sneeringly of a measure like the Murray-Kilgore bill and so complacently of the hardships from which it seeks to save less favored folk in the war to peace.

The average benefits under the Murray-Kilgore-Celler bill would be $25 a week. The maximum payment for a worker with three dependents who had formerly earned $47 a week or more would be $35 a week. That sum must cover rent, food, clothes and all other expenses. We don't know where Krock eats these days, but we doubt whether the prices are low enough to supply caviar, pompano and champagne on a $35-a-week budget.

That 35-a-week figure was meant to provide a minimum maintenance budget for a family of four as worked out by the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and translated into current prices. Sen. Kilgore described what that budget meant in the Senate Friday. The food allowance is 16 cents per meal per person.

What that would provide, as Kilgore explained, is one pound a week of meat, fish and poultry combined for the whole family of four. Each person in the family would have one pound a week of tomatoes, oranges, lemons, or other citrus fruits. Each adult would have about three eggs a week, including those used in cooking.

That is hardly caviar, pompano and champagne.

We resent the major premise on which Krock and the conservative press is attacking this bill. We resent the implication that persons will not work unless unemployment compensation is just enough to keep them from starving. We resent the implication that Americans are so lazy and so unmoulded to low living standards that they will not get-up-and-get unless they see hunger staring out at them from the faces of their children.

We wonder how it is that the advertisers of the conservative press have been able to sell so shiftless a people so many luxuries in years past. We wonder how they have prevailed upon them to work not merely for food and shelter, but for automobiles, radios, better furniture, electric washing machines, summer vacations and other nonessentials.

We agree with Sen. Tunnell, of Delaware, who told the Senate:

"Some say that if we let unemployed persons have any money, they will not work. On the same theory, I suppose a person should not be able to accumulate enough money to be able to buy a home, but should not be allowed to have a bank account, because he will not work. . . . If a person will not work when he has property, that is a great indictment against the vast majority of the American people. I have not found that it works that way."

Antonini Leaves For Italy

Washington, D. C.—Luigi Antonini, Vice President of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, has left by Army plane for Italy where he will represent the American Federation of Labor in attempts to re-establish the free trade union movement of that country.

Mr. Antonini will take part in a joint mission with representatives of the British Trades Union Congress to confer with Italian labor officials, discover their needs and report back what steps the American Federation of Labor can take to assist the labor movement of Italy.

The first step it is expected will be to free the Italian unions of any and all traces of fascism imposed upon them by Mussolini's regime.

However, the dissolution of fascism must be accomplished in a way to prevent any seizure by direct or indirect means of the Italian labor movement by the Communists. The Federation will be glad to assist and support the rebirth of a free, democratic trade union movement in Italy but it will not associate itself with any Communist-dominated organization.

AFL Offers New Amendments To Cure Shortcomings Of George Post-War Bill

Washington, D. C.—Pressing its fight for the adoption of post-war reconversion legislation which will adequately meet human needs, the American Federation of Labor sent to the House Ways and Means Committee a long list of amendments to cure the shortcomings of the George Bill which was adopted by the Senate over labor's opposition.

In addition, the amendments sought to substitute life unemployment compensation provisions of the defeated Kilgore Bill for those of the George Bill.

The Federation also hit the provision in the George Bill providing for an investigation by the Secretary of Labor concerning the feasibility of establishing annual wage minimums in certain industries.

"The real strength of wage formulas," the AFL said, "We want a return to honest collective bargaining with free hands."

Reconversion constitutes an emergency for the nation, the AFL stated in tempiated by State unemployment compensation laws which are blanketed in under the George Bill, the AFL emphasized. These state laws are inadequate to deal with unemployment even in normal times, the message charged.

The AFL listed these shortcomings in the unemployment compensation setup as contained in the George Bill:

1—State laws are inadequate in coverage. Only thirteen states cover employes of small business firms. The majority do not include farm or municipal employes. The George Bill makes no provision for seamen now served by the merchant marine.

2—State laws offer inadequate benefits. Last year average unemployment benefits paid in all country were $13.80 a week. Benefits of between $5 and $10 a week were paid 16 per cent of the total; $10 to $15 a week, 26 per cent.

3—Duration of benefits is insufficient. In twenty-six states, unemployment benefits are paid for only twenty weeks or less. It is estimated that the reconversion process, during which widespread unemployment is expected, may last from six months to two years, before full production is reached.

Labor's Box Score In The War

(*Extracts From an Official WPB Compilation*)

In the four years since July 1940, American industry and American workmen have produced more than 185 billion dollars worth of planes, tanks, guns, ships, ammunition and accoutrements.

This gigantic feat was accomplished at the same time that our armed forces were expanded 9½ million fighting men.

This total mobilization was achieved by bringing into the armed forces and into civilian employment 15,500,000 persons who were not employed in 1940. Between 1940 and 1943 women increased by more than 4,000,000; under workers, part-time workers, and young people were added to the labor force.

Millions of persons left jobs, businesses or farms and migrated from their homes into war production centers to meet the vast production needs of a successful war. More than 10,000,000 persons were trained in various public vocational training courses. The length of the work week was extended to increase production.

The average output per war worker has risen steadily, and in April 1944 was forty to thirty-five percent higher per worker than in December 1942. Mass production methods, better utilization of labor, and cooperation combined to accomplish such reductions as these:

Fighter Furnace (B-17), Boeing Seattle plant, reduced from 58,400 man hours to 18,700.

Liberators (B-24), Consolidated Vultee, San Diego, reduced from 24,800 man-hours to 15,400.

Liberty Ship, Oregon Shipyard, Portland, Oregon, reduced from 1,146,811 man hours to 594,184.

2100-ton Navy Destroyers, Bath Iron Works, Bath, Maine, reduced from 1,675,000 man hours to 925,000.

Motor Torpedo Boats, Electric Boat Company, Groton, Connecticut reduced from 65,000 man hours to 35,000; Higgins Industries, Inc., New Orleans, to 25,000.

In West Coast airplane plants, taken as a whole, the average output per worker has risen 814 percent in the past three years, according to a Congressional Committee report.

Plan For World Labor Cooperation

Washington, D. C.—In a special message to the Congress of Labor Latin America on Labor Day by the Office of Inter-American Affairs, AFL President William Green called on hemisphere labor cooperation to establish lasting peace and banish poverties.

"Opportunity of useful and steady employment to all persons who want work at fair wages and under decent conditions.

"Establishment of humane working standards to prevent exploitation and injustice, to maintain purchasing power and to abolish economic peonages.

"Social provision for child welfare.

"Raising standards of living to provide adequate nutrition, clothing, housing, medical care and education.

"Establishment of social security by providing insurance benefits to all workers whose employment is interrupted by sickness, injury, old age or lack of employment opportunities.

These are the basic essentials of the program of labor and will follow in the post-war years. To assure its success we invite the close cooperation of the trade unions of Latin America. By working side by side for mutually advantageous objectives we can truly learn to be good neighbors."